

The Crucible, Act II, by Arthur Miller
Reading Strategy: Read Drama

When we **read drama**, we don't have the same experience as we do when we watch a play on stage. Actors interpret the lines for us. Staging and direction also shape our experience.

When we watch a play, however, we may not see exactly what the author intends. In the written play, we are shown precisely the instructions and information the author has in mind. We also get to "cast" the play ourselves. What does John Proctor look like? If you attend a performance of *The Crucible* in which John Proctor doesn't look strong enough to you, or cackles when he should be laughing bitterly, the play may not have its maximum effect. When you read drama; pay careful attention to stage directions and the text itself, even punctuation. You can get a sense of what the author wants from the actors. At the very least, you can have your own interpretation, for your imaginative mind will have a role in the creation of the play.

DIRECTIONS: Each of the following items presents a stage direction from Act II with emphasis added. What is the importance of the emphasized part of the stage direction? Write your interpretation in the space provided.

1. The common room of PROCTOR'S house, **eight days later**.

2. He continues on to the firereplace, . . . lifts out the the ladle and tastes. **He is not quite pleased**.

3. PROCTOR, **scoffing but without conviction**: Ah, they'd never hang—

4. MARY WARREN: I am sick, I am sick, Mr. Proctor, Pray, pray, hurt me not. **Her strangeness throws him off . . .**

5. It is MR. HALE. **He is different now—drawn a little, and there is a quality of deference, even of guilt, about his manner now**.

6. ELIZABETH, **with great fear**: I will fear nothing. **She looks about the room as if to fix it in her mind**.
